

THE BULLETIN

of the
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
of
SCHOOL SOCIAL WORKERS

JUNE 1955

Volume XXX

Number 4

LIBRARY
ELIZABETH MCCORMICK MEMORIAL FUND
133 E. Ohio Street
Chicago 11

NATIONAL OFFICE

Room 810

One Park Avenue, New York 16, N. Y.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

OPAL BOSTON
3140 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, Ind.

VICE-PRESIDENTS

FLORENCE POOLE
3130 Hartzel
Evanston, Ill.

MRS. WALTER DRISCOLL
834 Summit Avenue
St. Paul 5, Minn.

SECRETARY

MARGARET QUANE
Evanston Township High School
1600 Dodge Street
Evanston, Ill.

TREASURER

ALMA LAABS
Minneapolis Public Schools
Jackson Building
Minneapolis, Ind.

Mrs. Marjorie Everingham
Baltimore, Md.

Claire S. Norton
Hartford, Conn.

Helen Harland
Champaign, Ill.

Mr. Ray Graham
Springfield, Ill.

Miriam Witham
San Francisco, Calif.

Ruth Gaunt
Milwaukee, Wis.

Adeline Jesse
Denver, Colo.

Gladys Hall
New Orleans, La.

Louise McKee
Berkeley, Calif.

Virginia Quattlebaum
Tifton, Ga.

Mrs. Mary Medler
Houston, Texas

Mrs. Amorette Richards
Seattle, Wash.

Mrs. Louis S. Weiss
New York, N. Y.

Louise Clevenger
Pasadena, Calif.

Ruth Smalley
Philadelphia, Pa.

COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN

EDUCATION

Florence Poole
School of Social Welfare Admin.
University of Illinois
Urbana, Ill.

MEMBERSHIP

Mrs. Helen Roell
Indianapolis Public Schools
150 N. Meridian Street
Indianapolis, Ind.

PROGRAM

Louise McKee
570 Woodmont Avenue
Berkeley, Calif.

BULLETIN

Clara M. Colteryahn, Editor
Board of Education
Bellefield at Forbes Street
Pittsburgh 13, Pa.

FINANCE

Alma Laabs
Minneapolis, Minn.

NOMINATING

Ruth Gaunt
Milwaukee Public Schools
1111 N. 10th Street
Milwaukee, Wis.

NOTICE TO SUBSCRIBERS

The September, 1955, issue of *The Bulletin* will be the last issue published by the N. A. S. S. W. This is in accordance with an agreement reached by the several T. I. A. C. Associations that publication of individual journals by the constituent Associations will terminate in September, 1955. A combined journal by the single organization—the National Association of Social Workers—will appear in January, 1956.



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page No.
Editorial Comment	2
The Triangle—The Parent, The Teacher, and The Visiting Teacher.....	3-15
The Visiting Teacher—Elsie Nesbit	
The Teacher—Mrs. Gwendolyn Guilbeau	
The Parent—Mrs. Elizabeth W. Landrum	
Training School to Public School	
Stanley Jacobson	16-20
School Counseling as Social Work	
Dr. Ruth E. Smalley.....	21-34

EDITORIAL COMMENT

The Lee County Schools, Georgia, have made a unique contribution to the literature of school social work. This article, "The Triangle—The Parent, the Teacher, and the Visiting Teacher," focuses on the relationship each has with the other and what his role is in order to help the child-in-school. "Relationship" is one of the most intangible facets of casework, yet it is the medium through which people are helped. The sensitivity with which each of the team members has described his role is unequalled. This material can be used as a teaching device.

Mr. Jacobson, in "Training School to Public School," has pointed up the challenge to school social workers to help school personnel meet the child who is returning from the correctional institution in such a way that the child feels the support of the schools. This is vital if he is to be helped as he enters a new step in his rehabilitation, the school, possibly the same place from which he earlier fled.

Dr. Smalley's article on "School Counseling as Social Work" is a follow-up article to "The Significance of Believing" published in the September, 1952, BULLETIN. In this current article, Dr. Smalley examines the specific efficacy of social work help as embodying both social values and individual values. Recognizing the need for free expression of the individual to realize himself fully, Dr. Smalley feels that this can only be done within the context of the society of which the individual is a member. The social worker must have the skill to enable the individual to do this. An illustrative case study points up the skills of a school social worker in helping a truant adolescent accomplish this objective.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Contributors to this journal are encouraged to continue submitting publishable manuscripts. It is expected that the editor will turn over to the new National Association of Social Workers good-quality manuscripts in school social work for publication in the professional journal of that organization.

THE TRIANGLE—THE PARENT, THE TEACHER, THE VISITING TEACHER¹

THE VISITING TEACHER¹

ELSIE NESBIT, Visiting Teacher

Lee County Schools, Georgia

When a child develops a school-connected problem which results in referral to the visiting teacher, there begins for him a close and significant relationship with three persons—his mother, his teacher and the visiting teacher. At the same time there begins a unique kind of association on the part of these three people with each other, a triangular interaction which constitutes a definite part of the helping process. The child is the bond, the adhesive factor, in this relationship. While the father is not overlooked in making plans to help the child, the mother usually represents the family in the triangle. Each of the three needs to know and to work with the others as well as to know and to help the child.

This relationship is the “dynamic” within which we work together. It creates the “atmosphere”, the “emotional setting”, for cooperative planning and progress. It denotes a common purpose, a working agreement, interaction, and interdependence.

When the child is referred, his relationships with his parents and with his teacher are already established. Though I am the new factor in the situation, change will not take place because of me alone, but because of the understandings and interactions developed among us and with the child. While I am building a relationship with the child, his mother and his teacher are forming ties with me and with each other. Because of a common interest in helping the child, these ties are more natural than formal or complicated.

The mother and the teacher are constants in the living situation of the child. I am requested to help him and to help them with him in the area of a specific situation or problem. It is the working together for this specific purpose which creates the unique tie.

¹ Visiting teacher is the term used to denote the school social worker in Georgia.

How is this different from other relationships? It has one specific focus, that of helping the child with his problem. It has definite personal and professional significance. Sometimes it is packed with emotions. In fact, it provides freedom for expressing, understanding, and working with emotions. Within this setting each can feel "all right" about revealing deep concern or hope. Neither has to "put up a front" or to prove personal worth. If the relationship is superficial or haphazard, its value is lost. It is not then dynamic. All attitudes and actions related to working with the child are significant. The tie that binds is real and is used consciously in the casework process. It enables the persons involved to discuss attitudes and feelings not ordinarily shared with others.

This kind of association has a definite beginning and should have a definite ending. It should not be allowed to drag to a close. When the child no longer needs help with the problem for which he was referred, the three members of the "triangle" return to a more casual—that is to say, a less intensive—kind of relationship. There should be continued sharing of the needs and progress of the child, and, if necessary, a request for further help. A definite ending does not mean an abrupt closing of the relationship. When the child is no longer receiving casework help, there is still a mutual interest in his well-being even though the relationship is less intensive and less urgent.

A part of my use of the casework skill lies in my conscious understanding of the meaning of these interrelationships to all of the others involved and to myself. The child who said, "Let's keep it a secret from Mother," and then hurried home to tell her, was concerned with relationships. While the mother, the teacher, and the visiting teacher form a triangle association, the child makes it a quadrangle. The only way to keep the lines of communication untangled is to keep in mind constantly the child and his needs.

Sometimes the interrelationships reach beyond the four immediately concerned. An entire first grade began to feel that a few of their group were unduly privileged to be allowed to go to talk with the visiting teacher. One alert little girl, who had developed a happy feeling of belonging, asked her mother why the visiting teacher never invited her to go to the office where there were toys and many things to do. This led the teacher and visiting teacher to arrange for the visiting teacher to talk with the group in their room. She explained that she was one of the people at school to help them, that everybody has problems and

sometimes it helps to talk with someone else about these problems. Whenever they had something they needed to talk about they could arrange it with their teacher, and the visiting teacher would be glad to see them. Then she invited the entire class to go with her to see the office and the toys. With their curiosity satisfied, they felt free after that to stop the visiting teacher in the halls or on the playgrounds to introduce themselves, to tell her of activities in their room, and occasionally to ask permission to go into the office with her. There was also more acceptance of those who were privileged to go regularly.

As the person of whom a request is made, I want the mother and the teacher to feel that it is right to make a request. It is as right to ask for help with emotional health as with physical health. A mother would not use her own remedies or expect her child to outgrow a severe skin rash, a heart murmur, or weak eyes. Neither does she become unduly alarmed over skinned knees or bumped heads. She takes the ordinary ups and downs of behavior as a matter of course, but with the serious difficulties she has a right to seek help.

It is too much to expect of a teacher that she have the skill to fulfill a child's every emotional need. She is not expected to diagnose or treat physical symptoms; indeed she is warned not to do so. Sometimes she needs another school resource to help with the personality disorders of her pupils. The relationship will have a different and more positive meaning if there is a mutual understanding that she does not have to wait to refer as a last resort. She and I, together with the mother, each has a contribution to make in the process of helping the child. We would not call the doctor as the last resort.

I also want the mother and the teacher to believe that I am not a judge. I do not decide whether behavior is right or wrong, good or bad. I am there to help overcome the problems and not to enforce standards. The referral itself denoted a need for help and that is my reason for being in the situation. I want the mother and teacher to feel that they are as important in the relationship as I am. It is part of my duty not to destroy but to strengthen the child's relationship with his parents and his teacher.

The nature of the relationship defines the role of each. It is my responsibility to assume leadership in beginning to work in the area of the problem presented. First of all, I want to make sure that all of us understand alike what the casework process is and how I will work with them and with the child. It is not what I want them to do but

how we will work together that is important. As work progresses, I continue regular contacts and share with them in relation to the needs of the child and their needs in helping them. I do not necessarily initiate all of the contacts because I must depend on them to share the responsibility with me.

The relationship is strengthened when I begin by looking for the positive elements while facing the negative. All of us have strengths with which we may begin to understand the situation and help the child. Stressing the positive is not being a Pollyanna but is a realistic way of facing the situation with a better chance for success. It is right to give encouragement but not glib reassurance.

It is my responsibility to become a member of the working team, to organize the team, so to speak. It takes time for a child to work out a problem, and he must not be hurried too much. In my desire to put them at ease, I must not be tempted to make any promises or predictions as to possible outcomes. By admitting frankly that I do not know what the results might be, that we will have to wait and see, I begin to be a working member of the team. While attempting to give support and understanding, I must consciously avoid appearing to have all the answers, which I assuredly do not have. Nobody wants me on a pedestal, a very fortunate circumstance for me. That would be an uncomfortable position to hold and a great injury when I fall, as I would surely do. It is my responsibility to offer my skills, and my willingness to try to help, in such a way that people know I am ready to work with them instead of for them. At the same time, there needs to be confidence in my ability to help. This will come about through the responsible way in which I fulfill my role, not in giving the answers or making promises.

I can help to make it easy for us to share in a three-way process. We share a great deal more than information—concern, anxiety, hope and accomplishment. Credit or failure do not belong to one alone but is mutual. We share faith in each other and in the child, a belief in the growth process and in the child's tendency toward emotional health. We share negative and positive feelings. We give of self in the relationship.

I try to make it easy for a mother or teacher to tell me what they think of the situation and what the child thinks of me. This means making it easy to share negative feelings. I feel secure with the teacher who can say frankly to me that a child does not seem to be responding to me or that he has expressed a dislike for me. The mother who said to me that I was no longer on her child's top list of friends but had

dropped to second rate was not only trusting me but also doing me a favor.

I also try to find an acceptable way to convey a child's negative or hostile feelings to the mother or the teacher. I have a very warm feeling of admiration for the teacher who can respond objectively with complete understanding and acceptance of a child even when she learns he does not like her. I have most admiration of all for the mother who is willing to discuss with me the conflicts between her child and herself as we work together to help him. Not all of the rewards for me come from working directly with the child. There are just as many heartwarming experiences in sharing this responsibility with the mother and the teacher.

Not all of the negative feelings in the situation belong to the child. The adults have them, too. There is no advantage in trying to have the relationship appear rosy on the surface when there are doubts or questions or misunderstandings. The purpose is not mutual admiration but helping the child in an honest way. I always feel that my relationship with teacher or mother is stronger if they can question a statement or an action they do not understand or with which they disagree. If these feelings are out in the open, we can find a way of working together to help the child.

I believe that it is meaningful to the mother and to the teacher when I share with them. I know that it is significant to me when they share with me. I can give of my own knowledge and convictions and recognize the importance of their exchanging their ideas and feelings about the situation with me. A close and positive working relationship can prepare us to meet the storm when the lid of Pandora's box is opened. Suppressing feelings, keeping the lid closed tightly, does not solve problems. The relationship enables us to take the lid off and work with the feelings that are thus brought out into the light.

THE TEACHER

MRS. GWENDOLYN GUILBEAU, Teacher
Lee County Schools, Georgia

Fortunately during my teaching experience I have had the wonderful opportunity of working with a visiting teacher in the county, with the exception of one year. That year now seems vague and far away, and I have tried to put it out of my mind—the children who needed addi-

tional help other than what I could give them in a crowded situation with limited time, the children who went to another grade without the help I knew they needed.

There is always the time limit which confronts me. Teaching in a rural area, where the homes are scattered over the county, makes it difficult to visit in each home. Here the visiting teacher helps me in my relationships to the home and to the child. Many times she already knows the family and can tell me of conditions in the home which may be affecting the child at school. She does this only after I have become deeply concerned about a child and have asked for her help.

The lack of time is not the major reason for my need of the help of the visiting teacher. That heavenly year when I did have a small grade and more time for individual attention I referred as many children as usual. I always think of the cooperation of the visiting teacher in terms of the children with whom we have worked together. Examples will illustrate better than words.

Having become quite concerned about the little girl who was constantly taking things—candy, pens, money, something different every day—I called for help. During my first conference with the visiting teacher I began to feel better—before she ever saw the child. Some of my anxiety was relieved when I was no longer confronted with a seemingly hopeless situation and instead we began a quest to find the cause of the child's actions. I was to observe the child's behavior and note all the circumstances connected with the stealing. As the visiting teacher worked with the child we shared our new knowledge of the child. Together we could decide how I should help the child in relation to the room and to herself. I began to look forward to the days when she went for her interview with the visiting teacher and to my conference with the visiting teacher. I well remember the day when we felt we had discovered the child's pattern of behavior and the probable reason for the stealing. After that, improvement was rapid. Knowing that the things the child took really meant nothing to her helped me to help her. Expressing my pleasure when she could manage herself brought a new relationship. Finally there was a very happy little girl who had no inclination to take anything that was not hers. I felt that through working together the visiting teacher and I had accomplished something neither of us could have done alone.

Very often a situation will arise which I do not know how to handle. A parent expects wonders of me, but, when the child comes

into my room, he is in a dream world. Although he listens and will smile occasionally, I have not touched him deep in his dream world. I wonder if I am at fault, for nothing I do seems to have any lasting value. The child is suffering; so are his parents; and so am I. Both the mother and I wanted the visiting teacher to help. Being the outsider—not the mother, not the teacher—she was able to reach the child. The wonder of an awakening came about. He began to show an eagerness to go to the visiting teacher's office and would seem elated on his return. Though I could get no spark of enthusiasm from him, I could take courage. The visiting teacher shared with me the results of the interviews with the child, helping me to understand his problem and how to work with him in the room. She also shared with me the results of her interviews with the parents insofar as it would help me with the school situation. Here the visiting teacher as the third person helped the child, the mother, and the teacher.

Even though I could instill in this little boy no interest in work, I began to realize that my attitude about his going to see the visiting teacher meant a great deal to him. Many little actions showed me he was seeking my approval. I learned from this that the child and I could form a partnership, though sometimes silent. Less disturbed children can talk more freely to me about seeing the visiting teacher. My encouragement is important to them.

In sharing information with the visiting teacher I try to give her a picture of the child as he is in the room so that she may know how I see him. From her I get a picture of the way she sees him. That helps each of us to understand him better. Every conference with the visiting teacher has helped me to understand the child better, helping me to know what to do and what not to do although I may never mention anything to the child.

Sometimes there are anxious moments when I feel that a conference with the visiting teacher would relieve me as well as help the child. I sense that at times the visiting teacher may feel the same way because she seeks me out for an extra conference. In working on a very difficult problem, the visiting teacher always reminds me that the child may get worse before he gets better. No matter how many times that happens, I always appreciate her reminding me. Otherwise, I might become unduly discouraged. I am not aware that it does happen every time, but it is good to know that such is likely to happen.

The visiting teacher knows I will ask for further help if I need it.

It always gives me pleasure to report progress to her after she is no longer seeing the child. Sometimes too the child will ask to go to see her just to tell her how she is getting along. This seems good to me because the visiting teacher has to give up the child just at the time when it is becoming a pleasure to work with a happier boy or girl. The change is mine to enjoy all the time.

With what may seem the smallest kind of problem, the visiting teacher has helped me. One of my pupils just could not keep up with the group in anything, was actually too young for the group. Discovering this during the first weeks of school, I wanted to talk with the parents about placing her in a lower grade. Talking to the older sister and to the child, I could never seem to set a satisfactory day to call upon the mother. There was always some reason why I could not go to the home. Deciding that I must not be wanted, I consulted the visiting teacher. She agreed to begin immediately. It was true that the mother did not want me to visit the home, but she was willing to place the child back if I thought that was best for her. In fact, that is what she had wished. Why, then, did she not wish to see me? There was an urgent problem concerning the child which the mother explained to the visiting teacher on the first visit but which she did not want me to know. This marked the beginning of a long period in which the visiting teacher worked with the mother and the child. Again the visiting teacher scored a hit, being the third person—understanding all situations in relation to the child, home, and school.

In our rural school, as in all schools, I am sure, we have the problem many times of steady attendance. I know that after the first several absences, for which I do not know the reason, the visiting teacher will soon be able to tell me. If it is because the child does not like school or thinks the teacher does not like him or that the other children "treat him mean", we work together to find what can be done. We examine me and my methods; we discuss the child in all situations; we try to determine if other children are hostile to him and why. No matter what the cause of the absence, there is usually something I can do if I know what the situation is.

It is good to know that I do not have to refer every child about whom I talk with the visiting teacher. Just to talk over a situation often gives me the help I need to continue working on it. Sometimes we decide together whether the child needs to be referred or whether a home visit needs to be made. Sometimes the situation concerns a num-

ber of children or children in other grades, too. Once a mother of one of the children in my room, becoming alarmed over the destructive practices of a little neighborhood gang, talked with me about the matter. While this was not a school problem at the time, there seemed great likelihood that several school grades might become involved. I discussed the possibility with the visiting teacher. Knowing the children in school who were leaders in the gang, and realizing that this might be the basis of their poorer school work, we were able to avert a probable outbreak of destruction and at the same time help two or three children before they became involved. This became a project which included several teachers, the principal, and a few mothers, too.

I do not mean to infer that, because it is helpful to talk over many different kinds of problems with the visiting teacher, I wish to lay all my burdens on her. I do not feel this way at all. Rather, I consider the visiting teacher service another resource at school to help me in my teaching. Sometimes the visiting teacher and I talk with the principal about a matter that concerns all of us. At other times the principal and I may decide to talk with the visiting teacher about a particular problem.

I always like to talk with the mother when possible when the visiting teacher is working with a child in my room. I know that it is important to her to know how her child is getting along in school at all times and especially when a problem has been identified and is considered serious enough to ask for other help. Most of the time the mother and I do keep in touch at frequent intervals, but that is not always the case. When the mother does not respond to my efforts to see her, I work through the visiting teacher.

The mother and I discuss the child in a different way than the visiting teacher works with the mother. I know that, in order to help the child, the mother might wish to share with the visiting teacher family matters which she does not care to discuss with everyone. It is better for me to discuss with the mother ways in which both of us can help the child with his school problem and how we can work with the visiting teacher to help him. Whenever the visiting teacher shares any information with me which the mother has given to her, I prefer to know that the mother has given permission. I might be under a strain in talking with the mother if I knew of a family situation which I thought she might prefer that I not know.

Working together with the visiting teacher, the mother and the principal is to me the most important part of this service. We share

our knowledge and our concern and we share in the child's improvement. I am "all out" for the visiting teacher service and especially for MY Visiting Teacher.

THE PARENT

MRS. ELIZABETH W. LANDRUM

Lee County, Georgia

I had always believed that childhood should be a happy time and that as long as a child was fed, clothed, and given love and a reasonable amount of freedom, he would be free from worries and cares. How wrong I was! Therefore, it was with a great deal of apprehension that I first realized that my child had a problem. Like so many other mothers, I suppose, I did not at first want to recognize the fact.

Our problem began to come to light for me when I realized how much my little girl dreaded starting to school. This dread came out as a complete lack of confidence in herself and her ability to master school work. "I can't go to school because I don't know how to read," she would say. Sometimes it would be writing she could not do, and it did not help to reassure her that she was not supposed to know those things before she went to school, that she would learn them along with all the other children.

Fortunately, I had known our visiting teacher both professionally and socially and felt no hesitation in asking her to help us. Looking back now, I wonder whether I would have requested her help if I had not known her already. True, I knew in a general way how she worked with children and that many children were happier in school because she had talked with them. But I did not know the real meaning of the service until she had worked with me.

I am not sure exactly what I was expecting when I went to the school to ask if the visiting teacher could work with pre-school children and if she could come to the home to talk with us. I must have thought that she had some kind of "hocus-pocus" that would turn a school-hater into a school-lover, and that overnight. I did know that she had a "way with children" which caused them to respond to her easily. Beyond that I must not have thought consciously. Now, two and a half years later, we are still working on our problem.

"Miss X" did come to see us. She worked with my little girl at home before she started to school and, after that, had a regular time to see her at school. From the beginning the child seemed to accept the fact that this person was "hers" and that she came for the definite purpose of helping her to like school. She rarely told me of anything that happened during these interviews, seeming to prefer that she and "Miss X" have a secret. I accepted this as the way she could be helped.

The visiting teacher talked with the child and with the teacher, and she talked with me. I talked with my child's teacher. My husband and I talked with each other. All of us talked and talked and talked. Slowly there came to me the realization that more was wrong than a mere dislike for school. The problem was more deep-seated than that.

Gradually I was aware that the visiting teacher's conferences with me were more than reports about the progress of my child in school. I am not yet sure how she did it, but slowly, painfully, and always with the greatest tact, she was leading me to see that the problem might not be all in the child. Part of it might be in my relationship with the child. In other words, I finally came face to face with the fact that part of my child's problem was me. I had a problem, too. Was my complete willingness to allow my child and the visiting teacher to have their secrets from me my way of running away from becoming involved myself?

It is difficult to see one's own mistakes. There is no personal gratification in recognizing that what you desire for your children consciously you may be fighting unconsciously. Most difficult of all is to face yourself and admit that something is wrong and you need help. Once it was done, however, and all the facts were out in the open, the highest hurdle was passed. I think I had dreaded being considered by the visiting teacher an inadequate parent as much as my child had dreaded school. Far from having that happen to me, I could face realistically the truth that parents can be wrong in many instances and still be good parents. In this atmosphere, I could work on the immaturities in my own personality which were the basis of my child's problem. Then wonderful things began to happen between my child and me. We no longer are fighting each other, but we can discuss our conflicts. She is much happier at school and at home.

The problem is not solved completely, but we are on the way. I keep in touch with the teacher and the visiting teacher, but my child and I are "on our own" now and are happy about it.

I do not think this could have happened to my child if the teacher, the visiting teacher, and I had not worked together as we did. There were two teachers, because the time extended over two school terms. Both have done their part to understand my child's fears of school and to help her to like school.

To the teacher and the visiting teacher this relationship is professional, and that is as it should be. To a mother it is personal. At times I was most self-conscious. I did wonder what they thought of me as a parent. At times I even questioned my own qualities as a parent. The visiting teacher began to see the changed attitudes of my child first, then the teacher. I was the last to see them. But when my daughter and I began to be conscious of a happier relationship between us, I began to be grateful for the process through which we had gone, painful though it had been at times. Now I can relate the experience without embarrassment. I can be as proud as my child that I have had the privilege of working with the visiting teacher. I can accept the fact that, far from showing a weakness by revealing my own part of the problem, it was the strength by which I overcame it. I can also be thankful that I was allowed time to understand my part of the situation. If someone had told me in the beginning that most of this was all my fault, I think I would still be allowing them to have their secrets from me. In fact, the visiting teacher helped me to see that I need not blame myself entirely, that my child is an individual too and that she needed to understand her part of the mother-daughter relationship. I can see evidence that she does understand in the thrill that comes to me when, after a conflict, she can say, "Mother, why do you suppose I do that to you?"

Because of the personal meaning to parents of this relationship, I wish school officials, P.-T. A. groups and the like, could find a more effective way of letting parents know how the visiting teacher service could be of real help to them without embarrassment.

This kind of working together with the school has been a new experience for me. Always before I had the private opinion that mothers who were such regular visitors at school must want some special privilege and that teachers might prefer that we not seek too often to talk about our children. This has not been the case. Without me, they would not have been able to do as much for my child. I was not made to feel in any way that I was intruding. There was a real partnership.

Perhaps this is the reason I would like to "get on a soap box" and advertise to other parents that there is great satisfaction in becoming a

real part of any situation which involves school problems of our children. We can throw away that bit of fiction which blindfolds and traps us with the rationalization that the service is for others but not for us. How good it is for all of us when we have experienced it for ourselves!

TRAINING SCHOOL TO PUBLIC SCHOOL . . .

TRAUMA OR TRANSITION¹

STANLEY JACOBSON, School Social Worker

Division of Special Services to Children
Baltimore Public Schools, Baltimore, Maryland

If you are a teacher or a principal—and you are; if you already try to *educate* more children than it is possible to *handle*—and you do; if the help you require to meet the demands of childrens falls far short of the need—and it does; if all this is true and you are then asked to enroll a child returning from a commitment to a training school, you feel stymied. You sigh with a sigh and prepare for another problem. And if you are the child returning after a relatively calm, well-organized year to the same chaotic world you could not cope with before—a world that expects *you* to have changed—you're in a sensitive spot. You sigh your particular sigh and begin again.

Year after year, the school and the returnee form this strained, reluctant partnership. And the strain and reluctance are understandable. The school feels it knows the child before it meets him. Typically, he was a constant threat to the smooth operation of the school before his commitment; and too often the threat became a reality. He demanded a disproportionate share of time and energy; and too often it brought no good result.

And the child? In some cases he does not fit the typical pattern: his relationship to school had been entirely satisfactory. But in most cases, the concepts that guide us meant little to him. He could not meet our standards, and the good intentions of his teachers could not alter the fact.

So neither partner can be optimistic about the prospect on his return. Unless there has been change, neither can believe that his experience will be different this time; and neither school nor child can trust that change has occurred.

But the school cannot perpetuate this destructive pattern. We have

¹ This is a reprint from the *Bulletin of Education*, Baltimore Department of Education, Baltimore, Md.

a responsibility to see past our feelings of despair to an area where we might find a way to wean this child from his destructive habits.

It is not too important to focus on his past: we are familiar with the story of rejection, disorganization, neglect, poverty, broken home. And whatever trouble he was in is over and paid for. It is enough to know that this child's young life is in serious danger. Having already behaved in such an undesirable way that he needed commitment to a training school, he may fall into an increasingly destructive way of living.

The child's commitment was the first step in his rehabilitation. In place of the terrible freedom to get into trouble, he was given external control and a chance to learn to "control" himself. Like other public agencies, the training school was not in a position to do all it wanted to do for him, but it did give him organization and limits. He did not have to decide to go to school or to resist joining a car theft; he simply was not in a position to choose. And if he was delinquent within that narrow area of day to day relationships where his behavior was up to him, he faced the consequence of a longer period of training.

He may have welcomed the support that limits offered. Perhaps it was the first time in his life that he had something to depend on. His freedom of choice was narrowed to a point where he could handle it; his responsibility was minimal. He was taking a rest from the pressures of his environment so that he could reorganize his forces. He was being punished so that he could learn the consequences of his behavior.

Then, having been trained, he was released—to the same world, making the same demands, presenting the same problems.

Through the Department of Public Welfare, some preparations had been made for his return. His parents began to face what they could do to carry out their responsibility for his welfare. Perhaps his mother quit her job to be at home with him, or the family moved to a better neighborhood. Or perhaps they simply put aside the money to buy new clothes for an older and larger child. If they could, they looked at their attitudes toward this child, what they wanted for him, and how they could achieve it. If they *could*—for attitudes are habits, and habits are hard to change.

The greater burden fell on the child. After all, it was *his* attitudes, *his* habits, that got him into trouble. And if a commitment of a year brought new attitudes, he was now on his own to sustain them. Now he would not have the support of an institution's authority and

rules. He would come and go on his own; and he would have to meet his parents' requirements, stay out of trouble, and go to school. All the minute to minute decisions that make the difference between delinquency and adjustment are his to make.

Two dependable forces are available to help him: the Department of Public Welfare and the Department of Education. His contact with them is compulsory; he cannot reject them.

He is committed to the supervision of the Department of Public Welfare. He and his parents report regularly to discuss his progress, hopefully to become a better parent and a better child. In any event, they report and meet certain standards of behavior or are held in violation of supervision.

The Department of Education oversees his return to school. Child and parent come to the Division of Special Services to be interviewed. His history, interests, goals, capabilities, and any special problems are discussed with them. An effort is made to help him recognize the problems he faces in returning to school. If tests become necessary, they are administered. Finally, the appropriate school is chosen, the principal is consulted, and the placement is made. At the same time an effort is made to set in motion plans to get the child any special help he may require—reading clinic, job coordination, social casework, for example. Then, for a month following the placement, the Division of Special Services is “on call” to school and family, and they are urged to avail themselves of the service. The Division, working cooperatively with the Department of Public Welfare, makes every effort to work out whatever plan seems in the child's best interest.

But the Department of Education has more than this to offer. School is the only activity that every child must experience; therefore it is a place where the returnee meets particular standards, is given certain benefits, is offered certain help, not because he has been in trouble, but simply because he is a child. He deserves what every child deserves. It is because of this that the school has the unique opportunity to help him to regain the faith that he is like other people and can live a life as constructive as others.

Whether or not he regains that faith is partly dependent on his beginning experiences, and his beginning experiences depend on us. If we are convinced that we owe him what we owe every child, we can welcome him as we welcome any other, knowing that neither over-

crowdedness nor the multiplicity of chronically troublesome children is his fault.

He deserves a welcome that shows we want him. If we set up special conditions under which he may enter, we are saying that we do not trust him. And unless we set up special conditions for *every* child, this amounts to discrimination.

He deserves an objective evaluation of his capabilities and his goals and a class placement that can help him realize them. He may be a candidate for any special class or special service by the same standards as any other child; and he and his family may accept or reject them on the same terms as others do.

He deserves a realistic appraisal of his behavioral history. He cannot be categorized. Like a bright child or a crippled child, a "training school" child remains an individual. We have to act on what we know of *him*, and not on bad assumptions about him. If we assure him from the outset that we do not hold his past against him, we are assuming *his* past school experiences are regrettable. This may not be so.

He deserves to have his training school history treated with matter-of-fact realism. He can never have a "clean slate" any more than the lame child can walk straight. It is a part of the history he brings to the new school, and it will affect him there. His experience cannot be hidden. In most cases, the children know it; the principal knows it; and the teacher will learn it from the record. Nor can it be treated as a crime in itself, lest the child be punished for having been punished. It must be seen as the experience it is intended to be: an effort to train the child to a more constructive way of living. We must leave room in our thinking for the possibility that it has been successful.

He deserves to have us expect of him what we expect of any other child of his age and ability—and no less. And he deserves the same prompt rewards and punishments—and no more. Every child, and particularly the "training school" child, knows that school expects him to meet certain standards of work and behavior. A special lecture on what the school expects is gratuitous, and it is futile as well. The maintenance of standards is accomplished by a firm, objective insistence on them day by day. When any child fails persistently in meeting those standards, he needs special attention.

With the "training school" child particularly, promptness is of key importance: one doesn't dawdle in the rescue of a child teetering on the

edge of a cliff. This means that it is neither necessary nor proper for the school to try to be everything to the child. When it is clear that some aspect of his personality or his environment is blocking his use of school, the help of other agencies must be enlisted.

Our job is teaching. Other aspects of the rehabilitation of delinquents must be left to other agencies, other professions, and, of course, to the family and to the child himself. Most people are struggling to make satisfying lives for themselves, no matter how misdirected they may seem. Courts, psychologists, psychiatrists, and social workers are doing what they can for them. Whatever any or all of us do, some children will not change. We lack the skill to reach some and the facilities to reach others.

But knowing this, we cannot therefore fail to provide what we *can* provide. We can use our knowledge of human motivation to understand the child's behavior. And understanding it, we can avoid the trap of rejecting him because he rejects us. He is compelled to spend five hours with us every day. We can use this unique position in his life to demonstrate that adults can be depended on. This much the school can do—and it can do no less.

SCHOOL COUNSELING AS SOCIAL WORK¹

DR. RUTH E. SMALLEY, Professor of Social Case Work
Pennsylvania School of Social Work of the University of Pennsylvania

Two years ago we were together in this room for the purpose that brings us back today to think about counseling² in the public schools, to examine its significance for school children and for school systems and their personnel, to consider what it takes to be effective as school counselors.² I spoke then of "believing" as central to any counseling that had vitality, and I identified three specific beliefs which we looked at together:

1. Belief in the life force itself as it operates in school child and school personnel including school counselor—the life force which can be trusted to put out, to find a way, to solve problems. Belief in the lusty, questing self-creature, yes, but creator, too, of its own destiny.
2. Belief in the efficacy of relationship, of the possibility of give and take in feeling and thought between two people, you and a child, for example, or you and your supervisor. Belief in relationship as the medium through which life force can come to use itself differently and more productively than in the way which has not worked well enough for the individual or for his social group.
3. Belief in the social institution you represent which you are seeking to help children use for their growth and development and for the accomplishment of that institution's own purpose as a public school.

I recall that some questions were raised at the end of our time together about whether it was all so easy as apparently I had made it seem. Was belief enough? What in addition to belief, implementing belief, could hold some certainty of effective helping? Something was unfinished between us, and I am glad to have this chance to return so that we may take a next journey, further into the territory that is of such interest to us all—public school counseling.²

¹ Presented to the staff of the Division of Pupil Personnel and Counseling, Philadelphia Public Schools, as part of its in-service training program, June 9, 1954.

² "Counseling", as used here, refers to social casework. "Counselor" is the term used in Philadelphia to designate the school social worker. Throughout this article, this terminology applies.

Today I would like to work with you more concretely on the specific nature of the task which engages you, and, as a first step, to identify it as *social work* having a common base in purpose and method with all social work effort. I know that most, or perhaps all of you engaged in counseling, are not social workers by training; but to me you have become social workers, through supervision and administrative control. I refer to the fact that your own required in-service training to become school counselors,² and the continuing administration and support of what you do, is the responsibility of professionally trained social workers: your supervisors, your division head, Miss Emilie Rannells, and your director, Mr. Robert Taber. I am not saying that social workers are the world's only helping persons. They are not. But the particular kind of helping process in which you have been trained to engage is the process which your supervisors were trained to practice, to teach, and to administer.

It is significant that the Philadelphia Public School System turned to social work as the profession to give leadership and supervision to its counseling program. The record of your work with children must provide to your School Administration far more than reassurance in its decision. It must arouse excited and grateful appreciation for the leadership given and used so well by all of you in the rendering of a service indispensable to any responsible public school. I can say this, looking on from the outside and very much moved by the records of your work which have come across my desk.

What unites you in purpose and method with all social workers, and what is the secret of the peculiar effectiveness of social work as a helping process? Social work has a long history. Its roots are in the Hebrew-Christian tradition of help to the unfortunate, in the efforts of groups of workmen and artisans in guilds to care for their own, in the creation of the early Settlement Houses, in the responsibility assumed by governments as long ago as the 17th century in England for each and all of a country's people. Today's complex pattern of social services in this country—under public and private auspices—sectarian and non-sectarian—offering help with a variety of problems to persons representing every social and economic level, and every age group, reflects all of those early beginnings as well as the new in purpose, philosophy and method, which has evolved through centuries of social work experience. As I understand social work, it has always had a double focus and a double identification. It has gone out to individuals who are feeling some dissatisfaction with the way they are living their lives or whose lives are stirring up dissatisfaction in others, and it has held itself accountable to society as a whole. It has

been concerned that the help it offers "pay off" both to the individual, and to the society of which he is a member. Sometimes social workers (and I am speaking here of social workers engaged in the practice of social casework) have had a hard time assuming that responsibility and have felt a perplexing and even disabling conflict in carrying it. Some have leaned so heavily on the "accountable to society side" that they have failed to perceive and respond sufficiently to the individual as he attempts to find a way to reconcile his urge toward individuation and differentiation of himself as a person, with his necessity to live within a social group. Such social workers have abandoned the troubled individual in feeling, failed to connect with him as a person, and so missed a chance to help. Others have become so wrapped up in the troubled individual as individual, that they have allied themselves with him *against* the outside, felt by them and by him as hostile and unreasonably exacting. They, too, have missed a chance to help. Only the social worker who has resolved within himself the inevitable life conflict of us all, through finding a way to be an "individual within a society", to be a self, responsible and unique within a framework of other selves, social institutions, and rules and regulations, in short to be "creative within a pattern" is in a position to help others resolve that basic and universal conflict.

Now social work in its very structure reflects its dual accountability to society and to the individual. It is always offered through a social agency, and it is offered (as social casework) through a method of individual-to-individual help. The social agency, whether a Department of Public Assistance, a child placing agency, a family agency or other, is supported by society, i. e., by the community as a whole, or some substantial segment of it, through tax funds or voluntary contributions as through a community chest. The source of support and the institutionalization of the service, I mean the fact that it is offered within a social agency with a defined purpose and policies which are the ultimate responsibility of a governing board representing the community, testifies to society's stake in the service offered. Some social agencies do not operate independently like those to which I have referred but are units or departments of social work within an institution having another purpose, such as a hospital, a court, or public school. The fact that these institutions engage social workers to help them achieve their own purpose as hospital, court or school reflects their awareness of the social purpose of the social worker, their appreciation of the significance of employing personnel who by tradition and training are equipped to help individuals live productively within some social reality. This would

include the social reality represented by their specific institution, and the larger social reality of the community as a whole. You see, I am ruling out social workers in private practice as practitioners of social work, because truly I do not believe they are, however helpful they, as individual therapists, may be. What we are examining today is the specific efficacy of social work help, and I have identified as one element in its helpfulness that it is constrained to yield dividends to society as well as to the individual. Your public school administration in providing for your training in social work by social workers is assuring itself that the help you give will be by design and by the nature of the skill through which it is offered—*social*; specifically a kind of help that furthers the capacity of the individual children you serve to live within the social reality of the public school.

I have so far dealt with the social values which inhere in social work, and which must inhere in the social worker, if what he does is to be socially effective. The other half of his accountability to the individual can be discharged only if he has an equal conviction about the significance of the individual like and of every individual's finding a way to live his life in a way that expresses and uses his own uniqueness as a person. This, too, is a value which inheres in the social agency which employs the social worker and which is expressed as I have said in its use of an individual to individual casework method of offering its service.

The psychological base for social work practice is found in the social worker's appreciation of the psycho-biological organizing force which characterizes and is the essence of every living being—the "Will", Otto Rank has called it. Freudian psychoanalysts in their current emphasis on ego psychology are approaching a new awareness of and respect for the capacity of the individual to work out his own destiny whatever the circumstances of his early family life. Increasingly biologists, embryologists, psychologists and anthropologists support this view as they look at life from their own vantage points. "From the very beginning of his existence," says Dr. Corner,³ an embryologist, "man has been engaged in organizing and operating himself." And Dr. Edmund Sinnot,⁴ writing of the biology of purpose, "Human individuality and personality, the ego itself, is simply one manifestation of the remarkable

³ Corner, George, *Ourselves Unborn*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1944.

⁴ Sinnot, Edmund W., "The Biology of Purpose," *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, Vol. XVII, p. 466.

process by which living matter pulls itself together into integrated and organized self regulating systems. The goal of the organizing process is a single whole individual." Talcott Parsons⁵ in reviewing Dr. Bruno Bettelheim's new book "Symbolic Wounds" dealing with initiation rites in various cultures, says, "No matter how neurotic or psychotic the behavior of the children in initiation rites might seem these were efforts of the children to help themselves, and were not imposed by elders nor were they prompted by irrational drives. It was instead based on a profound urge for freedom from those drives and pressures, the desire to master the irrational forces and thus establish their dignity as human beings and controllers and not puppets of their destiny. It was this which led the author to wonder if we had not done injury to man's inherent dignity when we interpreted one of his greatest rituals, which initiation is for many people, as simply imposed on him by tradition or by the hatred of the young by the old. He (Dr. Bettelheim) became convinced that these rites are motivated not by a desire to break man's autonomy and prevent his self realization but by exactly the opposite desire. Through initiation rites, young persons, indeed all the people who participate, try to master not a man-made conflict between the young and the old, but a conflict between man's instinctual desires and the role he wishes to play in society or which society expects him to fulfill. They are efforts at self-realization." The social worker operates out of an identification with social values, and out of an identification with individual values, out of a belief in the vitality of the social process and an equal belief in the strength of the individual psychobiological growth process.

The social worker is accountable to society and to the individual and is responsible for the development of a skill which furthers the capacity of individuals to live productively, in all their unique differences as individuals, within society. The method which social work has developed to discharge its responsibility in social casework agencies is a casework method, which comes alive as skill, and is made available and used, within an individual to individual relationship.⁶ The unique contribution of the social worker derives from the fact that it embodies both social values and individual values. He stands for the social good

⁵ Parsons, Talcott, in flyer reviewing; Bettelheim, Bruno, *Symbolic Wounds*, Glencoe, I, The Free Press, 1954.

⁶ I am talking here about social casework as one of the two basic social work methods and the one you are trained to use. The other basic method, social group work, operates from the same dual responsibility to society and the individual, but serves individuals through worker to group relationship rather than through worker to individual relationship.

and the good of the individual, and even more significantly he stands for the recognition that true social good is possible only through the self realization of free individuals, and that the individual can realize himself truly and fully only within the context of the society of which he is a member. Anarchistic behavior is not self realization at all. It is as destructive of the self as of society. And mere social orderliness, purchased at the price of individual initiative and free individual choice to will the good and achieve it, is as destructive of a truly live and growing social organism as of the individual lives it suppresses. In the social worker, then, *inhere* social values and individual values, and recognition of the relatedness of the two; and in the social worker also must *inhere* the method translated into skill in helping individuals fulfill their individual purposes in a socially, productive way.

It is time now to examine some of the specifics in method which are common to all of social work helping and which are effective for the achievement of social work's dual purpose. The focus of the help offered is on the individual's conflict with or failure to use productively some social reality or social relationship. To the family agency come married couples experiencing problems in their relationship to each other or in relationship to their children, or perhaps families unable to maintain themselves, in need of temporary financial and other help to regain their economic balance. To the child placing agency come parents experiencing problems in caring for their children in their own homes. To the protective agency are referred mothers and fathers who are failing to give children the care which the community regards as basic for its own well being and the well being of individual children. To the school counselor⁷ come children who themselves are troubled and dissatisfied with themselves or the school, or whose teachers or other school personnel are troubled by their failure to use the social reality of the public school productively and with satisfaction to themselves and others whose lives they touch. The social worker's first concern is to engage the troubled person in a consideration of the problem that is felt by him, or felt by others about him, in relation to a focus which inheres in the purpose or function of the social agency which employs him. The school social worker or school counselor's help finds its focus in the child's use of school. It is this function which brings the social worker and child together and which gives continuing direction to what they do. In his relationship with the social worker, the child discovers what

⁷ See Footnote 2.

he is like as he seeks to evade the help offered, control the way it will be offered, justify himself and blame others, or take all the blame on himself in a way that shuts out the reality of the outside and his responsibility to know and deal with it. Steadily the social worker represents the particular social reality which is the concern of his social agency or department and the social values which it embodies, while at the same time he responds to this particular individual and the problem he is finding in using that reality, with conviction about and skill in enlisting his capacity to find a way to deal with it. While I cannot recall the source of the quotation I often recall the words as I think of what may be involved for any person whose effort to become responsible for himself and what he is doing in social relationships involves looking at himself as he is, without denial. "It is more terrible than to face a lion in the streets, to face the truth about oneself." As the client in relationship with a human being who neither condones nor condemns but who holds him to being responsible for the self he is in relation to the social reality and the social purpose the worker represents, and with which the client is having difficulty, recognizes, acknowledges and possesses *himself*, his creative energy is freed to make of himself what he will within the limits of his unique pattern and potentiality. Energy that was formerly used for denying to the self and to the world that one was what one was, in excusing the self, in fighting the outside is liberated for the creation of a new self more whole and more real in its knowledge of itself and of the outside with which it must deal. The capacity to help in this way is not easily come by. It is easier to describe than to achieve, and it is not easy to describe. It requires of a social work helper a discipline and an owning of the way *he* is in relationship before he can help others own and possess what *they* do in relationship. This self awareness and self discipline in using the self in the service of another person come only through an experience in a relationship as with a supervisor, through which one has taken help for the purpose of being able to give help. It comes best for social workers within a supervisory relationship which is part of a school program whose classes and focus and process support and contribute to what is being achieved in live participation as a helper in a social agency or social work department.

Essentials of the social work method are the use of function, the use of the relationship, which I have described, and the use of time. The social worker learns how to use phases of time—the rhythm in time—beginning, middle, and ending parts of a process in which help is given which can be used for psycho-social growth and development.

He learns how to help a client make a beginning with him, complicated as any beginning is which involves entering into a relationship that expects change in the self, by feelings of fear and resistance as well as of hope and wanting of something different and better. He learns how to help sustain something over a period of the client's testing out a new way of feeling, thinking, behaving in relationship with him—the worker—and in other social relationships and realities, with all of the up and down and back and forth in any “middle” of giving and taking help. He learns how to help a client end with him, with a new capacity for functioning independently—I mean independent of his help and support. The school counselor whose function is to help children attend school and do something productive with it, represents an important piece of social reality. Holding the child to regular interviews in a specific place, the counselor's office, while offering a relationship within which the individual child can examine himself and his problems with school over a period of time, contains the potential of change for him. Just coming to the office regularly is a chance for the child to discover what he can do with *that* social requirement, whether he must continue to fight it, or whether he can let himself discover his own wish to use it positively. If and as he can find a way to use the social reality of regular interviews over a period of time, he has gained in capacity to use the reality of the public school, and the larger social reality within which he lives. If he can come to trust the intent of a person who represents the school toward him, he is on the way to trusting others, and himself in relationship to them—and, finally to discovering not just who and what he is against, but what he is for—a first step toward achieving his own goals for himself. As is well understood by you, counseling⁸ with the school child usually involves helping his parents, too, to the end that they may support and facilitate their child's new and better use of himself in school. The same skill available to the child is available to his family, and all that is done takes place within the context of active, collaborative relationships with the child's teachers, principal and other school personnel.

I would like to give an illustration of how the help I have described was actually offered by a school counselor⁸ to a school child. Ruth was a sixteen-year-old girl of good intelligence who had truanted from school and resisted and refused all efforts on the part of the school counselor⁸ and others, to help her to the point that a notice to appear before the magistrate's court was issued to the family. On January

⁸ See Footnote 2.

third the mother called before school to say that Ruth was on her way to school—and that she, the mother, had gotten her out of bed and thrown her out. She asked to be notified if Ruth did not arrive. Up to this point the mother had been apologetic for Ruth and had been a little annoyed with the school for being such a bother to them all. The following excerpts are from the school counselor's record of her subsequent work with Ruth:

1-3 "I told Ruth I had sent for her today because it seemed to me she was really up against things now and I was interested in seeing what she could do about it. She replied with composure that she had been going to look me up today. I laughed and said I hadn't expected it to go that far. It was something even to be in school.

"I asked Ruth how it had felt to be dragged out for something she hated so. She flared up for a moment and said she wasn't dragged out, what did I mean? I said, well, I was sure she hadn't come of her own accord and it must have taken considerable pushing to get her started. She said she doesn't know why that is, she really doesn't. I asked her if she hates school so; she said no, it just doesn't matter—nothing does.

"From here on she seemed to be really puzzled about herself. I asked if she remembered how well she thought things were going the last time she was in here. She said the funny part was they really seemed to be. I said, of course, they hadn't been, and I had been pretty sure at the time that something more was going to have to happen. She wanted to know how I had known that. I said from the mere fact that she had never faced the unpleasantness of it all and that that way, by just denying it, it generally gets you sooner or later. She wondered why it should have been unpleasant—she used to like school. I wondered with her.

"She knows she can do the work—to which I replied that she isn't doing it, though. She had not even been interested enough to look up her report that had been issued before Christmas so I got it out. She had the lowest possible grade in two majors, a plain failure in the other two, and a bare passing mark in her music minor. She agreed that that was pretty terrible. I thought it might make her wonder whether she really could do the work after all—maybe she is just kidding herself?

"This struck a chord and she played for awhile with the idea that maybe she doesn't belong here at all. She talked about vocational schools, but several times would remark, rather puzzled, that she is not interested in doing anything anymore. 'Why is that?' she would ask. I said I hadn't the faintest idea but thought it would bear thinking about.

"I suggested that if she really wondered whether she belonged in this school she might like a psychological test to help her find out where her interests are. She asked intelligent questions about it but said she would be afraid to take it.

"She said, as for not belonging here, if she had a million dollars she would

get away from this. I wondered if she thought she could get away from her feeling about herself and the school. No, she knew she couldn't. But she has no idea what she can do about it. I said, well the first thing, of course, is that she has to come to school—she really is up against something now and she has to accept that much whether she likes it or not and that may make her feel very funny. She replied that she would like to find out how she does feel, she doesn't know about anything.

"The movement through here was very slow, and after quite a pause she timidly and in a low voice started talking about her home and parents. She said it was hard to be happy when your home life is so miserable. I waited a moment and then said I did not know what the trouble was, and I thought it was unimportant whether I ever knew or not—the important thing is that it is so and how she can come to feel about it—how she will be able to go on with her own life, her school, even in spite of it. She brought out a lot of feeling saying, 'When two people you love most don't care for each other—' and I interrupted to finish for her that there just isn't anything you can do about it. I added that plenty of people try, and sometimes they use their own failure as a kind of big stick. She didn't think she was doing that. I said I hadn't meant to imply that she was—I wouldn't know anyway.

"She remarked that she certainly had wasted her time, she doesn't like the idea of having to repeat all the stuff next term. I agreed that she certainly had wasted a term, and now, what's more, she has school authority cracking down on her, and she must wonder what there is left for her to do about it. She said she doesn't think she has been very courageous. I said I didn't think she had been either, but maybe she is now in deciding to come along with authority and in honestly wondering what is the matter with her. Maybe the only thing she can do at present is just not deny that the whole thing is bad. Of course, there is an alternative to coming. She can go right on bucking authority and refusing to see herself as a pretty dismal picture until the court actually jerks her up again.

"The bell rang but she did not move. She said she had just been going to have lunch—and if I weren't busy—. She looked at my calendar and said she was surprised to see that I am so busy. She didn't suppose anyone else in school could have a problem like herself. I said I didn't suppose anyone had, but there were plenty of other problems.

"I had an appointment so could not continue the interview, and she asked for another date. She didn't see what she could do about it, though. I said I felt sure she had plenty of 'guts' when she finally knew she had to use them. She said she hadn't shown it yet. I said that might have been true yesterday, but maybe she is showing it right now in being willing to go on talking about what a mess she has made of things . . . "

Despite initial improvements following this interview, Ruth began again to stay out giving illness as an excuse and she was supported in that by her mother. It was the school's decision that from that time forward Ruth would have to have an official doctor's excuse for every absence, and that every absence would be reported to the Court. Ruth's mother was informed of that.

1-14 "I asked if her mother had told her I had talked with her. She said yes. I asked then if she had a doctor's excuse for her absence yesterday. She looked up in surprise and said no. I said she would have to have one from now on for every absence. She asked why. I said just because she will. She is under the closest scrutiny, and, furthermore, every unexcused absence will have to be reported to court. She made no response.

"I asked if she had been at the court proceedings last time. She said she had not had to go. I said she might have to next time. She asked if there would be a next time. I said yes, everything must be reported on Friday.

"There was a pause. I asked what this did to her. She flushed angrily and with a toss of her head said, 'It just makes me a little more bitter than I already was'. I supposed it did seem pretty bad to her. She burst out, 'It isn't fair. It's harsh and unfair.' There was a pause. I agreed that it must seem unfair to her. She continued, 'I suppose because I didn't do right you—or rather the school—feel you have to do this to me.' I said we were only carrying out the state law, there is no alternative. She repeated, 'Well, it isn't fair'. I waited a second and asked if she could explain how she meant that. She said it wasn't right to do this so suddenly. There should be some warning. I wondered if she had forgotten last fall—or maybe she hadn't considered that as warning? And, I added, she had been sick, hadn't she? She said hesitatingly that she had been sick, but added that it should have happened to her last year, that was when it all began. 'But, of course, I was sick then, too', she said and smiled.

"I made no answer and she went on, 'Maybe I shouldn't feel so bitter but I do'. I thought she should feel anyway she does feel. This is harsh treatment and of course she resents it, but it is going to happen to her anyway when she acts in certain ways. All the energy she used to use trying to figure out ways of avoiding school can be used right here now—all the feelings, good and bad, she can bring right here. Maybe she won't want to do that, and of course she won't get along by just being here; but at least she will have a chance to try. She thought for a moment and then said that if she comes she will get along all right, but it will take a long time. I agreed. I said that at long last she has it a stone wall and just as soon as she realizes that she can't crawl over it any place she can look around to see what is on this side. She liked this and took it up. She talked for awhile around the idea of limits and commented that this should have happened to her long ago.

"The problem for us, then I thought, was what she can find on this side of the wall. We grew very serious over the subject of music, where she seemed almost to dare to find an interest.

1-15 "Ruth came for scheduled appointment.

"During the conversation I mentioned a girl who was very rebellious over something that had happened to her. Ruth asked what good it did to rebel. I did not know. She went on, 'It isn't right to act that way'. I wondered what difference it made whether it were right or wrong when you feel a certain way—being wrong doesn't change your feeling any.

"I thought she was doing pretty well to stand up to her situation as she

is doing. She didn't think it was that—she just doesn't care. I thought it impossible not to care some, and not to be pretty sore over the harsh treatment. As a matter of fact, she had been yesterday. She hesitated a minute and then admitted that she had been annoyed. I said of course she had been and had every right to be. What's more, it isn't over yet. She asked why not. I said because this force is going right on. It will not let up for a moment and there will be times when she will be very angry. Very coolly she asked with whom? I replied with school, with me, maybe even with herself. She said, 'Not with you—why should I be?' I said because I stood for making her do things.

"Later, when the bell rang, I looked at my calendar and asked if we should talk some more. She hesitated, but I said firmly that I wanted to see her regularly for awhile. She agreed then very pleasantly and we made an appointment for next week."

Since the day Ruth had been out with an upset stomach she had been coming regularly to school. It had been several weeks since the court experience and when she came into the office on 1-24 for the next scheduled appointment it was instantly apparent that she had been letting the whole experience touch her. She was very much involved. She was no longer so superficially breezy and vivacious. The interview was marked by long pauses.

1-24 "After a brief silence in which we were both wondering hard, I asked if she would have any interest in a couple of orchestra tickets for a week from Saturday night. She eagerly accepted them. Suddenly she said, 'Why don't you keep them?' I said they had not been offered to me. They were tickets that were sometimes given to us for the use of interested students.

"Regarding choosing a roster for the new term I asked if she had come to any decision about taking the psychological test. She thought there was plenty of time for that. I did not think so. I did not make any particular difference whether she took it or not but I did think she ought to decide, particularly since they are scheduled so far in advance. She was astonished that there would be so many people taking it. Why would anyone want to take it—but maybe they liked it. I thought it just barely possible that some of them could do it even if they didn't like it. Could she imagine that? She looked at me quickly, smiled, and said she guessed so.

"I said she certainly was afraid she was going to be understood wasn't she? She started to answer in her usual airy way, then looked at me instantly and said, 'Well, how could you know that about me?' Most people, she continued, think she is an enigma, a mystery, they really can't understand her.

"She went from here into how she loves excitement and adventure and instead she is just bored all the time. She asked if I liked what I do. I said yes, I certainly did. She asked me if it is exciting. I said it is. I asked her, then if she is so bored with coming here to me. Instantly defensive, she said no, she just doesn't think about it, she really likes it she guesses; it is a help.

"I questioned that she likes it. She wanted to know why she would come then. I said well, for one thing she has to. She looked directly at me and said

she didn't *have* to come, did she? I said yes, I thought she did. She hadn't known that, she may not like it so well now. I asked if she remembered the time I had sent for her when she forgot to come. She said yes, that was right, I had, hadn't I? Well, she supposes it is like classes, you just have to come. Would that make her hate to come now, I asked? No, of course not, she replied; if she has to, she has to. I judged that she is very much puzzled as to why she has to come, is she? She was a little uncertain how to answer this. Then hesitatingly, she said, 'We-el, I guess I need help'. Again regaining her poise she said she likes to come here, she always feels different afterward. Then she looked me quite directly in the eyes, laughed embarrassedly, and said with a toss of her head, 'I get orchestra tickets, anyway'. I laughed with her and said that was certainly something.

"After this there was a short recess between the end of the first term and the beginning of the second. The first day of the new term Ruth stopped in to thank me for the concert which she seemed to enjoy immensely. I was glad she had had so much pleasure from it. I pointed out that now it was all over and there was another deadly term ahead. She looked rueful. This time she did not deny the unpleasantness but said there was no use in pretending that she liked it, adding firmly that she was going to do it anyway. I thought she was dead right in not pretending to like it and that actually that was the first step toward seeing it through. Ruth asked when she might see me again. I was careful then not to overdo the situation, but to let her carry it on her own momentum, which I felt sure was well underway. I said I would be glad to make regular appointments with her through the month and until the first report period if she wanted. But she did not take the initiative, no date was set and the situation was left at that.

"With one minor set-back which she handled in a very acceptable manner, Ruth has stuck to her guns in the most astonishing manner. We have had only one regular appointment since that day. This was the day the first reports were given out and Ruth was very anxious that her effort be rewarded. On that day she came to my office.

3-19 "Ruth was rightly proud of her report this morning. It is the first time since she first came to high school that she has passed anything. She had an A in French and had creditably passed everything else. She spoke earnestly of not being satisfied with it and discussed plans for making up the work she had previously failed in summer school. In the midst of this she stopped and smiled at me, saying that first, though, the important thing was to finish this term well.

"We had a philosophical discussion during which she remarked about her little sister, saying that she always tried to give her a good reason for the things she has to do. I asked if this seemed important to her. She said yes, indeed, you always must know why you have to do things, otherwise it would seem unjust and unreasonable. I thought that is the way life is often from our personal point of view—unjust and unreasonable, and that children have to find it out. It seems kinder for them to be able to learn it gradually from someone they feel sure loves them. If you give a child a good reason for something he can always think up another good reason for not doing it, and there is no reasonable end. There

seemed to me lots of times in life when you simply have to do what you have to do and no questions nor explanations. Ruth thought this over for a moment and then said she supposed there was something to that. You don't get reasons for being born, or for dying, and maybe there are some things in between too.

"From here on she was able to talk about school clubs and discussed one she thought she might like to join next term.

"She seemed like such a different girl. She has lost much of that ultra-poise, and seemed so much more like an eager, anxious child."

I will let these excerpts speak for themselves, pointing up only that here was a counselor⁹ making herself and her service available in relation to a social purpose with which she was identified and in which she believed. In short, she believed it was significant for all children including Ruth to attend school and do something productive with it. This worker believed equally in the capacity of the individual to find and act on his own purpose as an individual, and she believed that the true purpose of every whole individual was a social purpose—a purpose not inconsistent with—but contributing to—the social good. She was able to establish a warm, human connection with Ruth and to represent firmly and unequivocally, the social and individual expectation she felt. Ruth used the relationship and its expectation with its focus on school attendance and good work in school to make a start in being different.

The use of case illustrations always carries the risk of making what was accomplished seem too easy. The skill is disguised in the very degree to which it has become a part of the worker. Yet, what Ruth and the counselor were able to achieve testifies to what the social worker has to offer in purpose and in skill both to society and to the individual, working as he does at the point of problem in the relationship of each to the other.

So our journey for today is ended, and weary as we all may be there is the inevitable hesitation, at least on my part to have it over. So much remains to be said, to be discussed, to be qualified and elaborated, but limits operate here as throughout all life, and desirably so. May I close by expressing my appreciation of this opportunity to meet with you again, my admiration for what you are doing in your day to day work, for what you are bringing to the children and the schools you serve right here in Philadelphia, and also to that broader field of social work effort of which you, as public school counselors, are such a significant part.

⁹ See Footnote 2.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in a professional organization is a strengthening factor for the individual practicing within that profession. This is as true for the school social worker as it has long been for members of other professions. National Association of School Social Workers has members in 38 states and in Hawaii, Puerto Rico and India.

All members receive the National Association of School Social Workers Bulletin and other materials such as Newsletter, book lists, conference programs, notices, and other publicity. Membership is determined by the training and experience of the applicant.

Applications for membership and a statement of membership requirements may be obtained from the Membership Chairman, Mrs. Helen Roell, Indianapolis Public Schools, 150 N. Meridian Street, Indianapolis, Indiana.

* * * *

Copies of some issues of N. A. S. S. W. Bulletins from 1946 to the present are available at the National Office in limited quantities.

* * * *

Changes of address should reach the NATIONAL OFFICE as soon as possible.

* * * *

The Editorial Committee would like to publish material representative of practice throughout the country. Persons interested in having articles considered for publication are encouraged to submit them to the Editor of the *Bulletin*.

* * * *

The Bulletin is issued quarterly.

Single copies, 65 cents. Larger quantities at reduced rates.

